



CITY OF SAN DIEGO WATER POLICY IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 5, 2012

TO: Councilmember David Alvarez, Chair, Natural Resources & Culture Committee

FROM: Cary Lowe, Chair, Water Policy Implementation Task Force

SUBJECT: Natural Resources and Culture Committee October 10, 2012: Water Policy Implementation Task Force Progress Report

Introduction

On April 10, 2012, the City Council appointed the Water Policy Implementation Task Force and directed the Task Force to formulate recommendations for implementation of the Comprehensive Water Policy (Policy 400-15) which was adopted unanimously by the Council in October 2011. The Policy is a comprehensive strategy designed to meet San Diego's long-term water needs by reforming rate structures, developing incentives for conservation and embracing cutting-edge technologies. Members of the Task Force include industry and community leaders from a wide range of backgrounds. They have been tasked to develop specific goals, timelines and measurements of success to implement the new Policy.

This Memorandum outlines the Water Policy Implementation Task Force's progress and provides an overview of some of the policy items to be addressed by the Task Force in the future.

Task Force Progress

Since May 2012, both City staff and local organizations have made presentations to the Task Force, providing background information that will assist in developing recommendations for the implementation of Council Policy 400-15. Presenters have included:

- City of San Diego Development Services Department
- City of San Diego Public Utilities Department, Long-Range Planning & Water Resources Division
- City of San Diego Storm Water Division
- Scripps Institution of Oceanography
- Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
- San Diego County Water Authority

To date, the Task Force has focused on the following key goals:

1. Acquiring a comprehensive understanding of the City's water supply situation. Based on the presentations described above, as well as reports and other documents, Task Force members have developed a common level of knowledge that allows the Task Force to proceed with its task of formulating recommendations to the City Council.

2. Establishing working groups within the Task Force to focus on specific policy areas. To date, working groups have been created to address in detail issues involving (i) water conservation, and (ii) water reuse and recycling. The working group on conservation has presented a report to the full Task Force, which used that information as the basis for adopting the first set of recommendations, described below. The working group on reuse and recycling will report to the next Task Force meeting.

3. Formulating recommendations to the City Council on implementation of Policy 400-15. At its most recent meeting, the Task Force discussed and adopted an initial set of recommendations dealing with water conservation policies. The next meeting will continue the discussion of conservation-related recommendations and will commence discussion of recommendations on water reuse and recycling. Subsequent meetings will address other areas of Policy 400-15.

Initial Recommendations

The following recommendations have been adopted by the Task Force to be included in the final report due to the City Council in June 2013:

1. Make Drought Response Level 1 (Municipal Code Section 67.3805) a permanent voluntary water standard.
2. Consider modifying the Water Conservation Code requirements for new landscape construction and adding a trigger for applying such requirements to existing development. Request city staff to study this and report back with an estimate of the economic impacts of these changes.
3. Consider a water budget-based billing program for commercial landscape meters. Request city staff to study and evaluate the feasibility of such a program.

The Task Force also discussed extensively the need to implement permanent, ongoing water conservation and outreach programs, and for public officials and community leaders to participate in creating a citywide water conservation ethic. This issue will be discussed further at the next Task Force meeting.

Next Steps

The following organizations are scheduled to make presentations at future Task Force meetings:

- Equinox Center
- San Diego County Taxpayers Association
- Irvine Ranch Water District
- IDE Americas, Inc.

The following water policy issue areas will be scheduled for Task Force discussion in the coming months:

1. Water reuse and recycling, including indirect potable reuse, gray water use, and storm water capture and reuse.

2. Water rates, including reform of the tier structure, changes in pricing, and use of water rates as an incentive for conservation.

3. New technologies, include desalination and advanced water treatment.

The Task Force activities will conclude with a final report providing an action-oriented implementation plan to ensure a reliable, affordable and sustainable water supply for San Diego. These recommendations will first be delivered to the City Attorney in March 2013. The final report will be forwarded to the Natural Resources & Culture Committee in May 2013 for City Council action.

The Water Policy Implementation Task Force will present its second progress report at the first Natural Resources & Culture Committee meeting in February 2013.

CL:aa

cc: Honorable Mayor
Honorable Councilmembers
Jan Goldsmith, City Attorney
Andrea Tevlin, Independent Budget Analyst
Brent Eidson, External Affairs Deputy Director, Public Utilities Department
Kevin Smith, NR&C Committee Consultant